

the problems within the FEC with respect to enforcing the laws we have today. Congress has a responsibility to act today to close loopholes, clarify the law, and do everything possible to stem the endless chase of money in which we all engage.

We should pass McCain-Feingold immediately. We should end the abuse of section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code immediately.

Our Constitution doesn't stand in the way. The only thing standing in the way of our taking these modest steps is the reluctance to tamper with the system that we know and that has gotten us elected, even if we don't like it.

We are worried our careers won't survive. It seems to me we should be more worried about whether faith in our system will survive.

The trends are ominous. The soft money accounts in both parties' coffers are at record levels. In the first 15 months of the 2000 election cycle, the national Democratic and Republican Party committees have raised over \$160 million in soft money. Mr. President, \$160 million in corporate, union, and large individual contributions. Is there any real question why Americans are losing faith in our elections system?

Every election cycle, the cost of campaigns goes up and the number of people who vote goes down. If we really want to increase voter participation, we have to address that reality. The reality is, there is simply too much money in politics. We all know, whether we admit it or not, that the current system is broken. We have a choice: Do we reduce the influence of special interests money in Washington? Do we want to wink and nod at the few flimsy campaign laws we have?

Today we have an opportunity to answer that question. It seems to me that if we defeat Brad Smith's nomination and demand we be presented a nominee who will work with us to regain public confidence in our campaign laws, we will be taking the first step. Then we could pass campaign finance reform, the McCain-Feingold bill, and put an end to the flood of soft money into campaigns once and for all, and then shut down the so-called 527 loophole. Those three steps would go a long way in this election cycle, in this session of Congress, to do the right thing. They are things we can and should do. The currency of politics should be ideas, not cash.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Before I begin, I commend the distinguished Democratic leader, the minority leader, for his very eloquent statement and comments, particularly in regard to the need for this body to take up the issue of campaign finance reform. I could not agree more. We have had a series of hearings at the Rules Committee on the campaign finance system. We have heard from all sides, but we heard a little more from one side than another.

I tried to arrange for our good friends, Senator FEINGOLD and Senator MCCAIN, to testify. I talked to my colleague from Wisconsin about this so we could hear about the McCain-Feingold bill. I hope our colleagues and others heard the remarks. This is a very important issue. Nothing is more fundamental than trying to get a handle on this process that has gone wild. It is absolutely out of control, and it is getting worse by the day.

While there is obviously a great need to deal with other issues, nothing is more fundamental than how people get here, where their attention is spent, their time and effort, how it is allocated. Until we change the system, in my view, it will only get worse.

I applaud my leader for his comments. I know he reflects the views of the overwhelming majority on this side of the aisle and some on the other side. More importantly, I think the Senator reflects the views of the American public. There may be differences on details, but fundamentally the American public understands this system is not working well at all. The point that we spend more money each year on campaigns, while voter participation seems to be heading in the opposite direction, paints a very clear picture of what the American public thinks. I associate myself with those remarks and commend the Senator for those remarks.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001—Continued

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I want to spend a couple of minutes on the legislative appropriations bill and to commend Senator STEVENS and Senator BYRD, the chair and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, as well as our good friends, the chair and ranking member of the subcommittee, Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator BENNETT, for the work they have done in putting together, I think, a very responsible bill on the Senate side in terms of dealing with the costs of running the legislative branch of Government.

They have put together a good bill. They have been fiscally restrained in their approach. Obviously, our legislative branch should not be exempt from the kind of scrutiny we apply to every single aspect of this, the Federal budget. They are to be commended for packaging a bill that does less than the administration wanted but is certainly far more responsible, far more thoughtful, far more balanced than what the other body has apparently crafted.

The bill here is \$59 million over current spending but \$147 million below the President's budget request for operations of the legislative branch. We need to remember we are not just talking about Members' salary or staffs. We are talking about being the temporary custodians of these buildings we call the Capitol Grounds.

A few minutes ago, I greeted another student group from my State, from Woodstock High School, a group of

eighth graders, and, earlier, a group of students from a school in Washington, DC. I try to tell the young people when they are here, these are their buildings; this is their Government. They are not voters yet, but I want them to develop an appreciation of what has been handed down to us as temporary custodians, what we will be handing down to them in the coming generation so their children and their grandchildren will be able to come to this great Capital City of ours, come to the great buildings, and cherish and appreciate what it represents to them as citizens of the greatest democracy ever created in the history of mankind. As temporary custodians of their well-being, we have a responsibility not to somehow pad the budgets to serve our own comfortable interests but to see to it that we preserve this venue, this seat of democracy, for coming generations.

That is what Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator BENNETT have done with this budget. Regretfully, it is what the other body has not done. That is what makes me so sad. We can have differences here—Democrats, Republicans, conservatives, liberals, moderates—and debate issues. When it comes to the buildings, when it comes to the people every day who work here, whose names you will never know, who care for the facilities, who guard these buildings, not just the Members and the staffs who work here but the 10,000-plus tourists who come to their Nation's Capitol every day and come into the buildings. Officer Chestnut and Officer Gibson, who lost their lives just a few feet from where I am speaking, were protecting not only the membership when those shots fired but protecting hundreds of tourists gathered in the building.

To see a budget that disregards the importance of having good security here, not just for the Senators and Congressmen but for the innocent tourists who come to see their Nation's Capitol, is something of which we ought to be very mindful. What the House has done, of course, was to cut the police force by almost 12 percent, resulting in a reduction in force of almost 30 percent of the police force on these grounds.

I was a young boy in the 1950s in the other Chamber, a few feet from that Chamber, when shots rang out from the gallery, and Members of Congress were shot on that day. I was down in Washington on a spring break. I literally just missed being in the Chamber as a tourist on that day.

We have taken a lot of steps since then to try to see to it that people who are armed can't come in here and threaten the lives of people in these buildings. I remember being a relatively new Member in this Chamber when, I thank the Lord, we had all left on a Monday night and a bomb went off in the building. Had we been here, there would have been those, I suspect, who would have been severely injured, if not killed.

And of course the tragedy involving Officers Chestnut and Gibson and the gunfire in the Capitol Building is a sad commentary on the times in which we live. We all know this. But to talk about reducing the police force of these grounds by 30 percent, cutting the present force, is irresponsible. Hopefully, it will be reversed.

I commend our champions of this legislative appropriations bill for fighting back and putting their foot down, and saying you are not going to tolerate this because it is wrong to do this to the American public.

The Library of Congress as well would be cut here, the greatest library in the world just a few blocks from this Capitol—again, a great public library. The people of Connecticut may be more sensitive to this issue than others are. The very first public library in the United States was founded in New Haven in the 1600s, so we in my State have a special affection for libraries and their value.

The greatest of all libraries in the world is the Library of Congress. There is a wonderful exhibit going on as we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Library of Congress. I encourage people who are coming to Washington to visit the wonderful exhibit of the Jefferson library. It is Thomas Jefferson's library. It was the greatest private library in the hands of any citizen in this country when he donated it. Actually, it was sold for a very modest amount after the Capitol was burned in the War of 1812. Thomas Jefferson took the 6,000 volumes that was his library, the greatest private library in the world, and said this ought to be the basis of a great national library. At the cost of \$23,000, those volumes became the core of the Library of Congress we now celebrate, as we should, here in our Nation's Capital. The House proposal to cut into that budget by 1 percent, again, doesn't make a lot of sense to me.

The Congressional Research Service, again, is of great value to us as we try to do our work. They are wonderful people. It does not matter, when you are provided a report, whether it is Democrats, Republicans, Independents—they give us the facts, data, hard evidence that we rely on as we try to do the people's business. We couldn't possibly afford, nor should we, to expand our staffs to include all these people who serve as our extended staff. The Congressional Research Service, the CRS, has been of great value to people in these Chambers over the years. The House proposal eliminating one out of seven employees is an example of an unwise reduction in force.

With regard to the General Accounting Office, the House cuts it by 7 percent. Again, the General Accounting Office is tremendously valuable. I don't know of a single Member who has not relied on the General Accounting Office at one time or another to get good, hard, clean facts and evidence behind some of the more perplexing problems we face in our country.

As to the Government Printing Office, the Congressional Budget Office, as well, the House has acted very irresponsibly. I commend our leaders, as the ranking member on the authorizing committee, the Rules Committee, and express my support for what they are trying to do.

I say to the literally dozens and dozens of people who work in these buildings, be they police officers or custodial staff, doorkeepers, and the like, we do not get a chance to say this to you as often as we should but we appreciate immensely what you do. The American public, as I said, may never get to know your names, but you preserve their assets here every single day. The majority of us in this Chamber appreciate what you do. We appreciate the efforts you make around the clock.

Many of us have been here late in the night and meet these wonderful people, many of them women—women, not young women—who come by and clean these offices after everyone leaves, doing the tremendous work that they do. They are never seen by the Members or staff around here. I want to tell them today on this floor how much I appreciate the work they do. Again, I am confident I reflect the views of the overwhelming majority of Members in this body.

We thank Senator FEINSTEIN and we thank Senator BENNETT for their efforts. We applaud Senator STEVENS and Senator BYRD for demonstrating once again their deep appreciation for being good temporary caretakers, temporary custodians, of these facilities and these assets that belong to the American public. I am proud to be associated with both of these fine leaders.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for 12 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Wisconsin is recognized.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. FEINGOLD pertaining to the introduction of S. 2621 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. FEINGOLD. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Chair. Mr. President, I have reserved time for an amendment which would deal with funding for mailings for open house town meetings. The budgets today are very restrictive. In years gone by, there was an opportunity for a Senator to schedule an open house town meeting in a county seat and send out postal patron notices to everybody in the county. Then, an open house town meeting would be held where a relatively small number of people would appear, but at least everybody in the

county had notice that the Senator was coming. Everyone had an opportunity to hear a short report about what was going on in Washington and then an opportunity to ask the Senator questions.

We are under considerable fire and criticism on the issue of fundraising and the issue of access. For example, when we have fundraisers and people attend, they certainly do have access to Senators. There is no way to have a fundraiser where people attend without having that kind of access.

The question then arises: Is that kind of access unfair? I believe there is a very good answer to that by having the Senator go to the county seat, and make it convenient for people in the county to have access to the Senator to ask questions. The concept of having a town meeting to let people express themselves is something that I believe is very important and very fundamental.

The budget we have today does not allow for that. I was just discussing the matter with the distinguished chairman of the subcommittee to see if we might structure something which could be accommodated without having a contested amendment and a contested debate and then a rollcall vote.

What the Senator from Utah and I were talking about was an analysis of how many of our colleagues want to have open house town meetings. Many of our colleagues do not choose that as a form of communication with constituents. Others may have only a few open house town meetings. There is a big difference between small States and big States. There is a different picture that certainly arises in Utah than Pennsylvania.

As I said to the Senator from Utah, I would not necessarily be concerned about having the town meetings in the big metropolitan areas where there is a greater opportunity to communicate with the citizens through television and through newspaper stories. However, if you take, say, some of the northern tier counties of Pennsylvania or the north central or southern tier, unless you actually go to the county, it is very hard to make that kind of contact.

I would not want the entire year to go by without taking action. As I discussed with the Senator from Utah, perhaps in collaboration with the Senator from California, who is the ranking member on this subcommittee, and the Senators on the Rules Committee, we could try to get an estimate and perhaps put a funding mechanism in one of the later appropriations bills. Perhaps it could come in the appropriations bill on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, which I chair.

I do believe Senators would like to have this opportunity. It may well be that it would not be very expensive, depending on how many Senators chose it. Maybe we could, on an experimental basis, create a relatively small fund and find some way to administer it so

the people who want to have the town meetings can but with some limitations so that one or a few Senators do not take too much of the fund. Therefore, we could move in the direction of encouraging these open house town meetings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. BENNETT. I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania for raising this issue because it is a very legitimate issue, and I think it is a legitimate issue for the legislative branch subcommittee to deal with. We did not deal with it in subcommittee and in full committee. It becomes a challenge to try to find the money right now in terms of an offset within the bill.

The point the Senator from Pennsylvania makes is an extremely valid one. There are people who, in rural areas particularly, do not really have any sense of opportunity to interact with a Senator unless that Senator physically goes to those counties. Then when you try to notify the people that you are coming, you have a real challenge because they do not have the mass media coverage. Yes, they may get a major newspaper from a major metropolitan area, but they do not read it for hometown announcements. If you try local newspapers, many times they do not do the job, either.

The problem we have in terms of the reactions from members of the Rules Committee is that the Rules Committee has attempted to create the opportunity for this in terms of flexibility for the overall budget and saying to a Senator, "You have a pot of money you can use either for franking or for stationery, for travel, or some other item," and they are opposed to earmarking a particular amount of money for this particular purpose.

If we sit down with members of the Rules Committee and lay out the importance of what it is the Senator from Pennsylvania is highlighting and talk it through to find some creative way, I think we can move in that direction. I pledge to the Senator from Pennsylvania that I will work with him to see if we cannot do that because I agree absolutely with the end he is trying to achieve.

I think it is very important that we try to help Members communicate with their constituents in a meaningful kind of way.

As I understand it, from the Senator from Pennsylvania, this is not talking about a mass mailing of campaign literature, as we are accused of doing under newsletters and use of the franking. This is talking about simply a notice that would go out under the frank with respect to town meetings.

I am very sympathetic with that and would be happy to work with the Senator and the Senators from the Rules Committee and, of course, Senator FEINSTEIN, to see if we can't find a way to devise something that is not overly expensive—because I agree with the Senator, not every Senator would want

to use it—but that at the same time we could provide an opportunity for those Senators who would be willing to do the town meeting.

So I am happy to deal with the Senator to see if we can't find way to work this out.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, in response to Chairman BENNETT's suggestion, I would like to assure the Senator from Pennsylvania, as a member of the Rules Committee, I would be very happy to take a look at this and see what the problem is. The ranking member of the Rules Committee was here and is familiar with the subject. I believe he would be agreeable, as well, to take a look. And we will see what the problem is.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Utah and the Senator from California for those statements. Let us proceed on that basis.

Picking up on what the Senator from Utah said, it isn't a political mailing touting what any of us may think he or she has done. It is notice that the Senator is going to have his or her body at a given place.

As open house town meetings go, that can be a fairly high price to pay, to go out and face the music and face the constituents because they do keep track of our votes. But they have a very hard time following us if they live in Coudersport in Potter County or live in the northern tier of Pennsylvania or a southern tier county such as Fulton. They don't necessarily get any of the major newspapers and are outside television range. They may see some national television, but that is not an effective way for Senators to communicate with the people of their States.

When you appear at a town meeting, there is a feeling that something is going on that is positive. We Members of Congress in the Senate and the House are subject to a lot of criticism as being "inside the beltway" and not being accessible. People don't know what we are doing. And then we are going to these fundraisers where people have to make contributions to have access to us.

This is something which is not very healthy for a democracy. So let us proceed.

I will not offer an amendment at this time. I will see if we can work it out, starting with the chairman and ranking member on this subcommittee, and moving over to the chairman and ranking member on the Rules Committee, to try to structure a program which would accomplish the purpose and be affordable.

I thank the Senator from Utah and the Senator from California.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. BENNETT. I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania. I think, as I said,

he has raised an issue very much worth pursuing and one that we will, in all good faith, go forward on, to see if we can't work out some kind of solution that can get us where it is we need to be.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREE-
MENTS—EXECUTIVE NOMINA-
TIONS

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the 40 minutes of debate with respect to the nominations begin at 2:20 p.m. today, with the votes to occur at the expiration of that time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that Executive Calendar No. 454 be added to the list of nominations to be confirmed following the votes on the FEC and judicial nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001—Continued

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, we come to the time where we have another 25 minutes before the time comes for voting. I had been expecting the Senator from Alaska. He is still tied up in a previous meeting. So we will look forward to hearing from him.

It has been an interesting experience for me to serve as chairman of this particular subcommittee on Appropriations. There are those who say this subcommittee does not matter very much because its dollar allocation is the lowest of all of the subcommittees in the Appropriations Committee, with the exception of the District of Columbia. I disagree. I think this subcommittee, in fact, can have as much impact on the Government as some of the others that have greater amounts of money to spend because of its area of jurisdiction.

I will take a little of the time here to express my gratitude for the opportunity of chairing this subcommittee and for those with whom we work. The subcommittee deals with the Architect of the Capitol. That is a term that most people in the country do not understand. They would think of the Architect of the Capitol as the person who sits down and draws the lines on paper that produces the building of the Capitol. That is what architects do.

They do not realize that the Architect of the Capitol is charged with the responsibility of maintaining the Capitol. In this situation, I have been able to go around and meet those people who oversee the activities that go on with respect to maintaining our operation. They work for the Architect of the Capitol, and they are concerned with such things as the air-conditioning, the cleaning, the repairs, the restoration of the Brumidi paintings about which the Senator from West Virginia spoke.